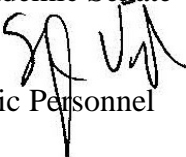




COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

May 19, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Sherryl Vint, Chair 
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Proposal to Extend COVID-19 Remote Instruction

At its meeting on May 13, 2020 CAP discussed the proposal to extend remote instruction at UC Riverside throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. Given the uncertainty regarding the progression of the virus, a timeline for a vaccine, and the wide range of contingent factors affecting students and faculty in diverse ways, CAP applauds the emphasis on choice that informs this proposal. At the same time, CAP thinks it is imperative to also ensure that any consequences this policy may have on personnel review actions are taken into consideration, with appropriate adjustments made. Thus, CAP recommends the following in conjunction with the adoption of this policy:

- Teaching evaluations will be included within personnel files on the basis of an opt-in decision by the faculty member, as recommended in our earlier memo regarding adjustments to evaluation criteria in light of COVID-19. No negative assessments or consequences will be attached to the decision to opt-out of including evaluations from the period of campus closure or the period of remote-option and mixed remote and in-person teaching. There are already documented problems with the adequacy of teaching evaluations as a measure of teaching effectiveness, and CAP is concerned these could be exacerbated under these conditions, during which a student may evaluate a course negatively based on the chosen method of delivery rather than based on the course quality.
- CAP recognizes that it remains important to assess effectiveness of teaching as part of the personnel review process despite these circumstances, however. Thus, CAP recommends that the campus begin to routinely include other evidence of teaching effectiveness beyond the standard classroom teaching evaluations, which may or may not be included in certain actions, depending on the duration of remote teaching and the candidate's choice. CAP draws Executive Council's attention to language from APM 210-1-d (1):

Among significant types of evidence of teaching effectiveness are the following: (a) opinions of other faculty members knowledgeable in the candidate's field, particularly if based on class visitations, on attendance at public lectures or lectures before professional societies given by the candidate, or on the performance of students in courses taught by the candidate that are prerequisite to those of the informant;

(b) opinions of students; (c) opinions of graduates who have achieved notable professional success since leaving the University; (d) number and caliber of students guided in research by the candidate and of those attracted to the campus by the candidate's repute as a teacher; and (e) development of new and effective techniques of instruction, including techniques that meet the needs of students from groups that are underrepresented in the field of instruction.

- The current requirement is for more than one kind of evidence of effective teaching. CAP recommends that for the period of remote instruction, only one kind of evidence be required. Given that the campus interprets the written comments and the numerical scores on teaching evaluations to satisfy the requirement of two kinds of evidence (although both come from the same source), CAP does not believe that requiring only one kind of evidence will compromise the integrity of the process. Given numerous extra burdens placed on faculty to accommodate changes related to the COVID-19 context, CAP believes it is unnecessary to create additional work to ensure "more than one kind of evidence" is submitted during this period. CAP emphasizes that this recommendation applies only to the period of the COVID-19 disruption of normal operations.
- If the campus decides that it will continue to include all teaching evaluations from this period in personnel actions, contra CAP's recommendation, in that context CAP recommend that the calculation of department and campus means be adjusted so that comparisons are made only between similar methods of instruction, i.e., an individual mean is calculated for each of online only, online-option, and in-person methods of delivery. CAP relies on the mean information to judge how well a candidate performs relative to normal expectations in a field and, given the high likelihood that students will evaluate courses very differently based on method of delivery, CAP feels adjusting the mean calculation is essential to ensure fairness in the evaluation process.
- Finally, given the ongoing need to devote additional time to teaching to make adjustments for remote teaching, CAP encourages the continuation of adjusted expectations for research productivity during this time. Our recommendations regarding how to account for changes to research productivity are outlined in detail in our memo of March 30, 2020, updated on April 27, 2020.

CAP also notes that Department Chairs are empowered by this policy to adjust teaching assignments as needed, to balance faculty choice regarding present on campus with decisions made at the Department level about course offerings. CAP wants to ensure that no faculty is penalized in the review process due to any changes in teaching load that might be a result of such adjustments.